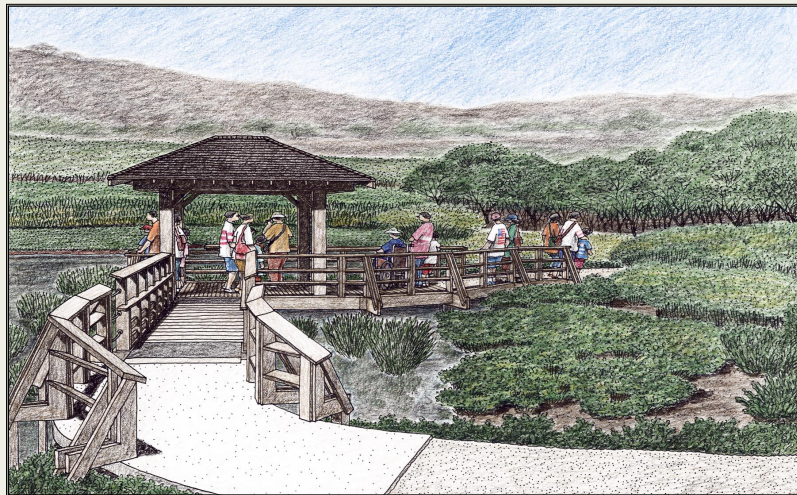




Picnic Area at Upper Pistol Range



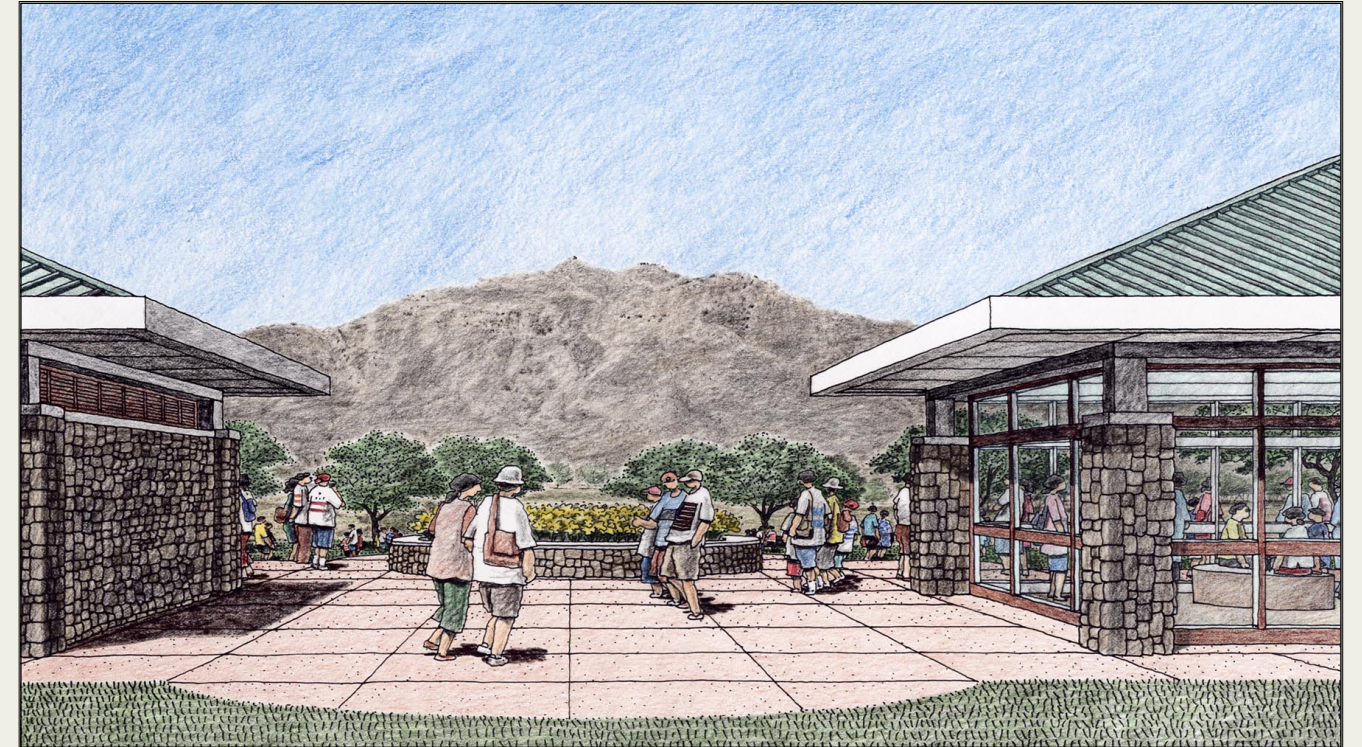
Restored Wetland



Tunnel 407 Picnic Area

Diamond Head State Monument is one of Hawai'i's most significant natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources. As one of the State's most popular visitor attractions, the Monument now receives approximately 800,000 per year, compared to just 40,000 in 1980. This significant increase in use has created an urgent need to develop the Monument to accommodate this number of visitors while protecting the site's natural and historic resources.

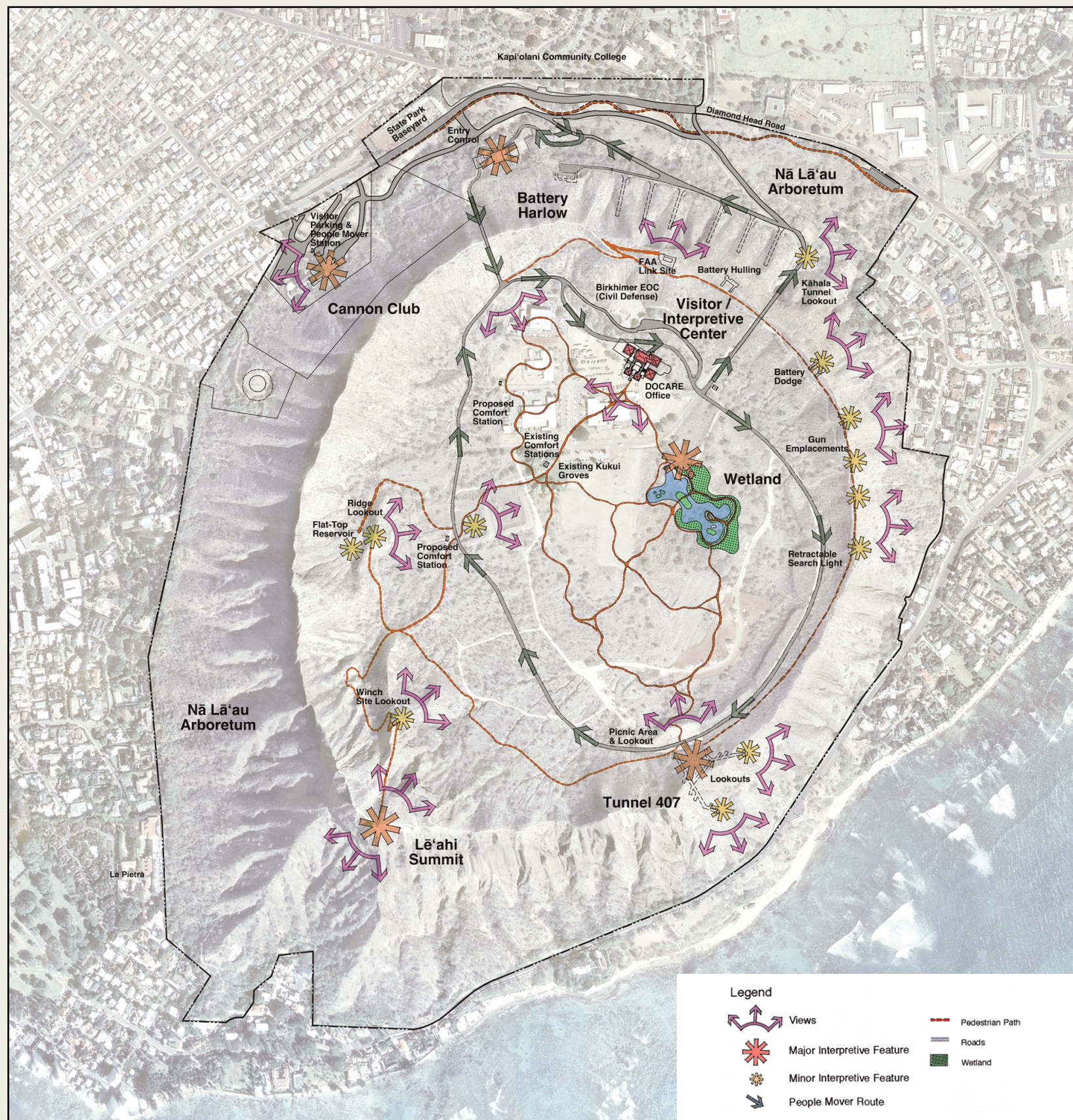
Over the past five years, PBR HAWAII has worked with the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to complete the Diamond Head Master Plan. This work included interviews and public meetings, coordination with the Diamond Head Citizens Advisory Committee, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (accepted in January 2001), planning and design of the Diamond Head Visitor/Interpretive Center (completed in June 2003), and preparation of the final Master Plan (completed in July 2003).



Proposed Diamond Head Visitor Center

Diamond Head, also known as Lē'ahi, lies on the southern coastline of O'ahu and is one of Hawai'i's most prominent natural features. From the 15th century through present day, Diamond Head has served as the backdrop for many of Hawai'i's most important social, religious, political, and military events. Establishment of the Diamond Head State Monument in 1962 by Governor William F. Quinn recognized the exceptional natural value of the crater and the need for its preservation. Today, Diamond Head receives approximately 800,000 visitors each year.

In response to concerns regarding the degradation of the crater's natural resources and the need to improve the visitor experience, the 1997 State Legislature funded an update of the previous Diamond Head Master Plan prepared in 1979. The Master Plan (completed by PBR HAWAII and the Department of Land and Natural Resources in July 2003) identifies several elements critical to the preservation of the crater as a natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resource and establishes plans and designs for the incremental development of the Monument, including a visitor/interpretive center.



MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS

1. *Endangered Plants.* There are a number of rare and endangered plants concentrated in a few locations within the crater. To protect these plants and the habitats, some proposals include restricting access to the crater rim, providing buffer areas around the habitats and implementing various fire control measures.

2. *Fragile Soils.* There is only one “official” trail in the crater open to hikers. Yet, many hikers make their own trails up the exterior slopes of the crater or along the crater rim, causing erosion, altering the appearance of the crater, and trampling endangered plants. It is proposed that hikers be restricted to the existing and newly established trails.

3. *New Lookouts and Trails.* It is recognized that there are numerous views available in and around the crater and the existing trail can get crowded. To provide more view and hiking opportunities, new trails and lookouts are proposed. These include trails to a series of gun emplacements along the eastern crater rim, which could be created by clearing an overgrown service road. A major lookout being proposed, located on the crater’s exterior side of Tunnel 407, would provide south and east views and overlooking the Diamond Head lighthouse.

4. *Historical Features.* Presently, the only historical features that most people experience are Kāhala Tunnel and the Fire Control Station on Lē’ahi Summit, yet Diamond Head contains a wealth of hidden historical structures. The Master Plan proposes that the two major structures, Tunnel 407 and Battery Harlow be opened as interpretive facilities. Other historical features that would be made more accessible include: The Flat-Top Reservoir and a series of gun emplacements along the eastern crater rim.

5. *Visitor/Interpretive Center.* Presently, the crater is appreciated mostly for its views offered at Lē’ahi Summit, yet the crater consists of a number of unique geological, biological, and historical resources. Uninformed visitors and users will continue to inadvertently damage these resources. As proposed in 1979, a new visitor/interpretive center is proposed between Kāhala Tunnel and Battery Birkhimer.

6. *Long-Term Vehicular Access.* Presently, numerous visitors enter the crater via motorized vehicles and park within the crater. As the number of visitors increase, the increasing number of buses, motorcycles, and mopeds will detract from the crater environment (in terms of visual character, noise, and air quality). The Master Plan proposes that in the long-term visitor entry and parking be kept to the exterior of the crater, at the Cannon Club. Kapāhulu Tunnel would be opened and pedestrians and bicycles would be allowed through both the Kapāhulu and Kāhala Tunnels. For those who cannot walk/bike into the crater, a motorized people-mover is proposed.

7. *New Picnic Areas.* Three new picnic areas would be developed. One picnic area would be located on the Pistol Range (the existing trail to the Summit cuts through this area). Another picnic area would be located on the outside of Tunnel 407, facing the crater interior. Each picnic area is planned to have a new comfort station.

8. *Restored Wetland Pond.* The interior of the crater originally contained a wetland, but this resource has been extensively filled. The remaining wetland is very small and contains standing water only during major storms. Although native water birds have been sighted, without standing water there is no habitat for these birds. It is proposed that the wetland be restored with non-potable brackish water (from wells located outside of the crater). The restored wetland would also serve as an irrigation storage for replanting the crater floor with more native plants.

